(a) whether it is a fact that there is a steady increase in the number of corneally blind people in the country in general and in Delhi in particular;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years, state wise and year wise;

(c) the steps taken to prevent the corneal blindness during the same period and the success achieved in this regard;

(d) whether it is a fact that arrangements for collection of corneas are woefully inadequate in the National Capital Territory of Delhi; and

(e) if so, the steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) No data are available to suggest increase in the corneally blind people.

(c) Do's & Don'ts are issued from time to time during the festival of Diwali and Holi to avoid Eye Injuries from Crackers, Synthetic Gulal, Baloons etc. which can lead to corneal blindness.Prophylactic vitamin A solution is given to young Children to prevent nutritional blindness.

(d) and (e) There is scope for improvement in the arrangement for collection of corneas in the NCT, Delhi. To get more corneas, Hospital Cornea Retrieval Programme is being organized with the support of major hospitals, medical colleges, Non-government sector, Army/ESI/ Railway Hospitals of the country. Training of Hospital staff is organized on Grief Counselling for mortivating relatives of terminally ill patients for donating the eyes. There is shift in the focus from "Pledging of Eyes" to actual collection of Eyes. To get more corneas and to make people aware about Eye Donation, National Fortnight is celebrated from 25th August to 8th September annually.

Foreign Assignments of Government Doctors

35. DR. ABRAR AHMED:
SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of doctors of Government Hospitals of Delhi who have not returned and joined their duties after completing their foreign assignments despite government's directives to do so; and

(b) the action taken in each case?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) Currently five Central Health Service doctors working in Government Hospitals of Delhi and 10 faculty members of All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, have not returned and joined their duties after completing their permissible period of foreign assignments. Out of five Central Health Service doctors, four are facing departmental proceeding and fifth one whose tenure has completed on 5.3.2003, has been asked to join immediately. In so far as faculty members of All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi is concerned, disciplinary proceedings against 9 faculty members have been concluded. Remaining one faculty member has requested for grant of further extension of his assignment.

TB Infection among employees of TB Hospitals

36. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have information on various TB Hospitals in the country;

(b) Whether Government are aware that even employees working in these Hospitals become TB patients; and

(c) If so, what steps Government are willing to take control and tackle this disease?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. However, there is no authentic data/information in India regarding TB among hospital staff. It is estimated that about 22 lakh new cases are occuring in the country every year of which about 10 lakh are sputum positive (infectious) cases.

(c) To control the disease, National TB Control Programme is in operation in the country since 1962. This could not achieve the desired results. Therefore, Revised National TB Control Programme, widely